

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims replaces all prior claims, and listings of claims, in the application:

Claims 1-30 (Cancelled)

Claim 31 (Previously presented): A data communications connection method for the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) comprising the steps of:

prior to the establishment of a TCP/IP connection an initiating party computer system sending a connection request message to a receiving party computer system;

receiving the connection request message at the receiving party computer system;

opening a TCP connection at the receiving party computer system for the initiating party computer system, and, communicating between the initiating and receiving party computer systems using TCP communication packets.

Claim 32 (Previously presented): A data communications connection method according to claim 31, wherein the connection request message includes data on the connection requested.

Claim 33 (Previously presented): A data communications connection method according to claim 31, wherein the connection request message includes information on the initiating party computer system.

Claim 34 (Currently amended): A data communications connection method according to claim 31, further comprising:

evaluating the connection request message at the receiving party computer system prior to ~~accepting a~~ opening the TCP connection.

Claim 35 (Previously presented): A data communications connection method according to claim 34, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating data within the connection request message.

Claim 36 (Previously presented): A data communications connection method according to claim 34, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating the initiating party computer system.

Claim 37 (Previously presented): A data communications connection method according to claim 34, further comprising negotiating an encryption key during evaluation.

Claim 38 (New): A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a data communications connection method for the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) comprising the steps of:

prior to the establishment of a TCP/IP connection an initiating party computer system sending a connection request message to a receiving party computer system;

receiving the connection request message at the receiving party computer system;

opening a TCP connection at the receiving party computer system for the initiating party computer system, and, communicating between the initiating and receiving party computer systems using TCP communication packets.

Claim 39 (New): The computer-readable medium of claim 38, wherein the connection request message includes information on the initiating party computer system.

Claim 40 (New): The computer-readable medium of claim 38, further comprising computer-executable instructions for the step of evaluating the connection request message at the receiving party computer system prior to opening the TCP connection.

Claim 41 (New): The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating data within the connection request message.

Claim 42 (New): The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating the initiating party computer system.

Claim 43 (New): The computer-readable medium of claim 40, further comprising computer-executable instructions for the step of negotiating an encryption key during evaluation.

Claim 44 (New): A communication connection system adapted to communicate under the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP), comprising:

an initiating device adapted to send a connection request message prior to the establishment of a TCP/IP connection; and

a receiving device adapted to receive the connection request message, open a TCP connection at the receiving device for the initiating device, and communicate with the initiating device using TCP communication packets.

Claim 45 (New): The communication connection system of claim 44, wherein the connection request message includes information on the initiating device.

Claim 46 (New): The communication connection system of claim 44, wherein the receiving device is further adapted to evaluate the connection request message prior to opening the TCP connection at the receiving device for the initiating device.

Claim 47 (New): The communication system of claim 46, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating data within the connection request message.

Claim 48 (New): The communication connection system of claim 46, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating the initiating device.

Claim 49 (New): The communication connection system of claim 46, wherein the receiving device is further adapted to negotiate an encryption key with the initiating device.

Claim 50 (New): A communication connection system adapted to communicate under the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP), comprising:

an initiating device adapted to send a connection request message prior to the establishment of a TCP/IP connection, the connection request message comprising an IP datagram;

a receiving device adapted to receive the connection request message, open a TCP connection at the receiving device for the initiating device, and communicate with the initiating device using TCP communication packets.

Claim 51 (New): The communication connection system of claim 50, wherein the connection request message includes information on the initiating device.

Claim 52 (New): The communication connection system of claim 50, wherein the receiving device is further adapted to evaluate the connection request message prior to opening the TCP connection at the receiving device for the initiating device.

Claim 53 (New): The communication connection system of claim 52, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating data within the connection request message.

Claim 54 (New): The communication connection system of claim 52, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating the initiating device.

Claim 55 (New): The communication connection system of claim 52, wherein the receiving device is further adapted to negotiate an encryption key with the initiating device.